

<b>Process Name:</b> Purchasing	<b>Process Identifier:</b> PU
<b>Sub-Process Name:</b> Solicitation (formal)	<b>Sub-Process Identifier:</b> PU-2 (f)
<b>Sub-Process Purpose and Objectives:</b> To solicit, evaluate, and select bids from outside vendors for goods and/or services, or to establish a purchasing contract in accordance with State policy.	
<b>Sub-Process Description:</b> In the case of a formal solicitation, bids are solicited from vendors via a formal, sealed-bid process.  A Solicitation record is created from a Requisition in TOPS via a status code change. Terms and conditions are added to the Solicitation record, as well as “S” notes regarding trade-ins, etc. Typically, the Buyer will print a draft of the Solicitation and make any necessary revisions. Once revisions have been made, the TOPS system generates an electronic approval path. When all required approvals have been granted, the Buyer determines the type of bid list that is required and triggers the generation of a bid list in the TOPS systems.  A pre-bid conference is required if the amount of the procurement is expected to exceed \$100k. A pre-bid conference can also be held at the Buyer’s discretion. If a pre-bid conference is to be held, the Buyer generates a notification in TOPS and also generates an extract regarding the notification that gets posted on the State’s Website and also on GATT’s Website if the amount is expected to exceed \$540k. Print Support then assembles, checks, distributes the notification, plus mails a copy of the notification (which includes a draft of the Solicitation) to selected vendors. Pre-bid conferences may be mandatory for vendors, and agency representatives may wish to attend at their option. Revisions to the draft Solicitation document may be required after the pre-bid conference, and if changes are required, the changes are made in TOPS, an electronic approval path is generated. Once all required approvals are granted, the Buyer generates a procurement schedule in TOPS and then prints the final Solicitation, and the TOPS system automatically generates an extract to be posted on the Internet.  The MIS group posts the extract on the Internet, then Print Support assembles, checks, distributes copies, and mails the solicitation to vendors. Some vendors will learn of the Solicitation and request a copy which will be sent to them. Vendors that request a copy of the Solicitation are recorded in the TOPS system.	

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Occasionally, a problem is detected in the Solicitation prior to the opening. If such a problem is detected, an addendum may be generated in TOPS and mailed to vendors. In some instances, the Solicitation may even be canceled.

When bids are submitted by vendors, the bids are received in the Bid Room. The formal bid openings are conducted in the Bid Room where the proceedings are recorded. If an error(s) is found in a bid, the error is scanned, the bid is marked for provisional rejection. A letter is generated notifying a vendor that they are being barred from bidding for a certain period of time when they have been sent three Provisional Rejection letters.

After the formal opening, bids are sent to the Bid Tab Section where the bid data is entered into TOPS for tabulation. The tabulation results are generated by TOPS overnight. The Buyer receives and reviews the tabulation results and has the Bid Tab Section make any necessary adjustments/corrections. Once the Buyer is satisfied with the tabulation results, he/she updates “S” notes in the TOPS system and evaluates whether the low bid meets the Solicitation’s specifications, all terms and conditions, insurance requirements, etc. If the low bid does not meet all these requirements, the Buyer attempts to find the next lowest bid that meets all requirements and seeks approval for not selecting the lowest bid.

When the lowest bid that meets all requirements is found, the Buyer evaluates whether the low bid is within the Requisition’s tolerance limit. If the bid is not within tolerance, several things can happen: the requesting agency may increase funding, cancel the procurement, or request a re-advertisement. If the bid is within tolerance, the Buyer sets the Award Flag. Setting the Award Flag generates an electronic approval path, and the transaction will proceed only after all required approvals are granted.

Vendors may request to view the Solicitation file, in which case, the file is opened for viewing. IN some instances, a vendor may file a protest. If the Board of Standards does not side with Central Purchasing, the Solicitation is re-advertised. If, however, the Board of Standards sides with Central Purchasing, the transaction proceeds.

If the selected vendor does not have, or is unwilling or unable to acquire the necessary insurance coverage, the Buyer attempts to find the next lowest qualifying vendor. If, however, the required insurance coverage is put in place, the Buyer sets the Solicitation

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status code to “Award” and the process moves forward to the Award Document sub-process.			
<b>Sub-Process Trigger(s):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>This sub-process is triggered when a formal solicitation is required by State policy for a given procurement</li></ul>		<b>Key Sub-Process Participants:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Vendors / Bidders</li><li>Agencies (requestors, Buyers, approvers)</li><li>Central Purchasing (which will conduct the solicitation in certain circumstances [e.g., when creating an Agency or Statewide contract, performing a One Time purchase that exceeds \$10k, etc.])</li><li>MIS Group (posts extracts to the Internet)</li></ul>	
<b>Inputs:</b>			
<b>Input</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Volume/Time</b>	<b>Suppliers</b>
Need to conduct an informal solicitation	Electronic		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Agencies</li><li>Central Purchasing</li></ul>
<b>Outputs:</b>			
<b>Output</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Volume/Time</b>	<b>Recipients</b>
Formal solicitations mailed to vendors (and posted on the Internet)	Paper		Vendors
Bid tabulations	Electronic		Buyers
Awards Notifications	Paper		Vendors

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<b>Performance Measures Tracked:</b>			
<b>Measure</b>	<b>Approx. Value</b>	<b>Target Value</b>	
<b>Laws, Regulations, and Policies That Govern Sub-Process:</b> Purchasing policy and State and federal code			
<b>Current Sub-Process Issues/Problems:</b>			
<b>Improvement Opportunities:</b>			
<b>Opportunity</b> <i>Merge cells to link one Opportunity to multiple impacts)</i>		<b>Organizational Impacts</b> <i>(Individually list and describe laws [L] regulations [R], and policies [P], as well as cultural [C] considerations for each opportunity)</i>	
		L	
<b>Applications that Support the Sub-process</b>			
<b>Application Name(s)</b> <i>(Internal name and vendor's name)</i>		<b>Technology Description</b> <i>(Programming vendor, language, platform, database, etc.)</i>	
TOPS		TOPS is based on a system that was developed by Information Management Specialists, Inc.; the company conducts business under the name of Informs. Informs' name for the system is Advanced Government Purchasing System (AGPS). The system is written in COBOL and runs on a mainframe.	
State's Website			
GATT's Website (if amount exceeds \$540k)			

















